Province of
British Columbia

Provincial Agricultural Land Commission

Province of
British Columbia

Ministry of
Agriculture
Fisheries and Food

Honourable Bill Barlee, Minister

British Columbia Cataloguing in Publication Data

British Columbia. Provincial Agricultural Land Commission
Annual report. — 1978–

Report year ends March 31.
Continues: British Columbia. Provincial Land Commission
Annual report. ISSN 0703-2374
ISSN 0708-4048 = Annual report - Provincial Agricultural
Land Commission

1. British Columbia. Provincial Agricultural Land
Commission. 1. Land use, Rural - British Columbia.
3. Agricultural conservation - British Columbia.

HD319.B7B764 354.7110082'326

92-04168/

Province of
British Columbia

Provincial Agricultural Land Commission

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 MARCH, 1990

133 - 4940 Canada Way, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5G 4K6
Telephone: 660-7000 Fax: 660-7033

Province of British Columbia

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Parliament Buildings
Victoria
British Columbia
V8V 1X4
Telephone (604) 387-1023

The Honourable David C. Lam
Lieutenant-Governor
Province of British Columbia

May It Please Your Honour:

I have the pleasure of submitting for your consideration the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission for the 12 month period April 1989 to 31 March 1990.

Yours truly

N L Barlee

Bill Barlee
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

British Columbia
Agricultural
Land Commission

Telephone: (604) 660-7000
Faxcom: (604) 660-7033

Room 133, 4940 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4K6

November 6, 1991

The Honourable Bill Barlee
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia
V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Barlee

Pursuant to Section 28 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act, I respectfully submit the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission for the year ended 31 March 1990.

Yours truly

Lorne E. Greenaway

Lorne Greenaway, Chair
Agricultural Land Commission

CONTENTS

General Manager's Report	1
The Achievements	2
Purpose and Accountability	3
Operating Policy	4
Program Review	5
Commission Meetings	5
Application Review	5
Commission Review of Planning Projects	6
Administration of the Soil Conservation Act & Regulations	6
Statistical Overview of Application Activity	7
Financial Report	9
Notes to Financial Report	10
Commission Members	11
Support Staff	12

General Manager's Report

The Challenge Continues

The challenge of preserving British Columbia's agricultural land grows with each passing year. As the population of the province increases, as the land use needs for housing, recreation, business and servicing requirements grow, so too does the challenge to maintain our agricultural land base.

Accommodating these various land uses in a manner that respects our limited foodland for the long term is a challenge that will only be met through the continued joint action by all levels of government and the support of British Columbians in general. There must exist a stable environment within which the agricultural industry can operate.

Some people see agricultural land as part of an open space concept contributing to their pastoral security as green belts and park land. It must be recognized that farms are an active enterprise constantly adapting to produce food for our tables. Farming has its own dynamic land use needs and operational requirements that may come in conflict with, and are often distinct from, our park and open space needs.

Others believe that agricultural land is simply vacant land waiting to be developed for urban and industrial uses. Part of the challenge is to address this attitude, to seek and utilize the creative alternatives that do exist. The ALR is not intended to limit the potential for British Columbia's communities or regions to grow.

Rather, the Agricultural Land Reserve provides a clear identification of the highest quality agricultural land within the province. Now that it has been identified, it is the responsibility of all land use decision makers to sustain and steward this important renewable resource and ensure our agricultural future.

K. B. Miller, Acting General Manager

The Achievements

- Estimates indicate that as much as 6,000 hectares of prime agricultural land were lost each year in B.C. prior to the establishment of the ALR. Since 1974 this loss has been reduced to less than 700 hectares per year.
- The ALR has helped British Columbia achieve one of the best records in Canada in curtailing the percentage loss of prime agricultural land to urbanization within our urban centred regions. Over three times better than the nation as a whole — over four times better than the Province of Ontario.
- The ALR provides greater stability within our agricultural communities and provides the land base upon which the agricultural industry has increased the province's self sufficiency in food supply.
- The ALR is the land base upon which 120 different commodities valued at more than $1 billion are produced each year. The reserve also secures potential agricultural land that can be brought into production as the province's population and food requirements grow.
- The Commission has considered over 25,000 applications under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. This effort has:
  - allowed an ongoing re-examination of the ALR to ensure more defensible ALR boundaries;
  - allowed consideration of legitimate land use needs of local governments;
  - allowed the Commission to respond to the desires of individual land owners, while trying to achieve a balance between individual aspirations and the long-term preservation of our foodlands for the benefit of all citizens of British Columbia.
- The Commission works closely with local governments to accommodate growth with a minimum loss of our agricultural resource and to lessen the impact of non-farm development on agricultural communites.
- The ALR has provided a positive influence on the management of urban growth. More effective use of our urban land base is occurring. Infilling of urban areas has been encouraged, costly and haphazard urban sprawl is discouraged and a more efficient use of services is being achieved.
- With the ALR has come a growing public awareness of:
  - B.C.'s limited land base available for food production;
  - the value of the agricultural resource to the economic health and security of the Province;
  - how sensitive the agricultural industry is to the impact of non-farm uses; and
  - the importance of ensuring the long term preservation of our agricultural resource.

The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission was established as an independent agency of the Province of British Columbia in 1973 to identify and protect the province's limited agricultural land base. It is the Commission's objective to preserve agricultural land for present and future farm use.

The Commission, as established under the Agricultural Land Commission Act, consists of no less than five members and reports to Cabinet through the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The Commission's statutory objectives have been incorporated in the following mission statement:

To preserve for British Columbia the land resource useful to its agricultural industry

To assist with the development of agricultural land use planning; and to encourage farming through proper land use management

To provide associated advisory services to British Columbia's government, the public, and the farming community

The Commission has a staff of 18 employees to oversee the day-to-day administration of the Agricultural Land Commission Act and the Soil Conservation Act. Every year several thousand site specific requests for change of use of ALR lands either in the form of applications from individual property owners through local government or Official Community Plan amendments are received by the Commission. This small staff works closely with local governments, other government agencies, and members of the public to research and prepare these requests which are all reviewed by the Commission.

Operating Policy

The general policy framework within which the Commissioners and its staff carry out the intent of the Act and conduct Commission business includes:

- ensuring the long term maintenance of the ALR. The Commission in its work, must view day-to-day requests in the form of applications against the longer term ability of the land base to support agriculture.
- refining the ALR boundary to reflect improved information on soil, climate, crop potential, terrain, and present land use, and other factors which define the agricultural landscape.
- improving communication linkages and working relationships with local governments.
- ensuring that local government community plans and implementing bylaws reflect a proper balance between short term community growth requirements and longer term provincial agricultural needs.
- sustaining the quality of agricultural soils through a timely response to applications and potential infractions under the terms of the Soil Conservation Act.
- ensuring that Commission approvals for subdivision requests within the ALR do not compromise the agricultural potential of the land.
- avoiding precedent setting decisions which have potential negative consequences for future agricultural land management.
- identifying and exploring all options during the review of applications, which may provide solutions for applicants, while maintaining or improving the agricultural potential of the land base.
- directing non-farm land uses to areas outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve wherever possible.

The Commission's administration of the Agricultural Land Commission Act focuses on three main areas of activity — review of applications, review of planning projects, and the administration of the Soil Conservation Act.

Commission Meetings

In addition to holding its regular monthly meetings in Burnaby, the Commission travelled extensively and met with numerous local government representatives. During the 1989/90 year the Commission met with elected representatives from the Regional Districts of Cowichan Valley, Fraser-Fort George and Peace River, and the Municipalities of Abbotsford, Coldstream, Langley, North Saanich, Saanich, Taylor and Vernon.

These field trips have strengthened the Commission's working relationship with these jurisdictions and has provided information on some of the issues these governments are confronted with in their dealings with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. Travelling into the various regions also provides the Commission with an opportunity to view ALR lands first hand which is of great benefit in the application review process.

During September 1989 the Commission also attended the Union of B.C. Municipalities convention which was held in Penticton. The Commission maintained a meeting room throughout the convention where members of local government could discuss ALR issues with the Commission.

During the year the Commission also attended the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association Annual General Meeting and also had representation at the British Columbia Federation of Agriculture convention held in December.

Application Review

Aside from several specific and limited exceptions established under the Regulations, the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* precludes the use of ALR designated lands for purposes other than farm use. Subdivision or non-farm use of ALR land must first receive Commission approval before proceeding.

The daily work of the Commission is dominated by its response to applications initiated by individuals, local governments, or by the Commission itself. These applications may seek to exclude land from the ALR, subdivide or to pursue a non-farm use within the ALR, or to include additional lands into the ALR. Examples have included requests for everything from minor boundary adjustments within the ALR to hundred million dollar pulp mills. Commission staff research each individual application often supplementing it with additional material such as airphotographs, agricultural capability mapping, as well as information from other government agencies. The Commission, in recognition of its small staff complement, relies heavily on local government staff input as well as technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

During the 1989/90 fiscal year the Commission reviewed over 1,200 applications in total. No application is ever considered routine; often a single application will require a lengthy debate before the Commission makes its final decision. There are many situations where the Commission will require additional site specific information from either the local

government, other government agencies, or from its Farm Advisors who are appointed through the B.C. Federation of Agriculture. Wherever possible, the Commission will personally view the subject properties.

Commission Review of Planning Projects

Of the 174 cities, districts, towns, villages and regional districts in British Columbia, 126, or 73% of the total, contain Agricultural Land Reserve lands within their boundaries. Therefore, the ALR is often, an important issue of consideration by local government during the preparation of Official Community Plans or Zoning Bylaws which define future land use patterns. The Commission has an active role in the review of local government plans and bylaws to ensure that the intent of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* is supported during the planning process. Since its inception, the Commission has reviewed and forwarded comments on over six hundred Official Plans, Zoning and Subdivision Control Bylaws, Transportation Network Plans, and Crown Land Plans.

The land-use planning exercise provides the Commission with an opportunity to become acquainted with local community based land use issues. At the same time, the planning process provides an avenue through which a local government and staff can become more aware of the importance of agricultural land preservation and incorporate these provincial objectives into its plans and bylaws. During the plan preparation process a review of the Agricultural Land Reserve within a given jurisdiction often forms part of the planning exercise. Adjustments to the ALR resulting from this review very often eliminate the need for many individual applications since the adjustments, if handled through a single block application, may actually involve hundreds of individual parcels.

Administration of the Soil Conservation Act & Regulations

In addition to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act,* the Commission is responsible for the administration of the *Soil Conservation Act* and Regulations. This Act is an important companion statute to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act.* It ensures that any soil removal or deposition of fill on lands within an ALR is done in accordance with sound agricultural practices. Applications are required for the removal of soil or placement of fill and if the proposal reduces or eliminates the agricultural potential of the property, the application is refused.

The Act is administered and enforced jointly by the Commission and local authorities with additional technical and enforcement assistance available from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The total number of applications received during the 1989/90 reporting period was 1,262.

By far the largest percentage (44%) of all applications received were made under Section 20(1) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. These are applications for subdivision or non-farm use of lands while retaining them within the ALR. During this period 200 applications for exclusion of property from the ALR were received, or approximately 16% of the total applications received during the 1989/90 period.

The reporting period saw an overall increase of 235 applications from the previous year, which represents an increase of 18%. A summary of the type of applications is as follows:

Type	Number Received	% of 89/90
02	200	16%
21	561	44%
Other	501	40%
Total	1,262	100%

The Province has been divided into six regions for administrative purposes. The following tables show the number of local governments for each region, the size of the ALR and the percentage of the region in the ALR.

Interior Region

5 Regional Districts
15 Municipalities

Current ALR 1,564,701 hectares

Interior ALR 33.2% of the total ALR which is approximately 7.8% of the region

Kootenay Region

3 Regional Districts
15 Municipalities

Current ALR 388,692 hectares

Kootenay ALR is 8.3% of the total ALR which is approximately 6.6% of the region

Lower Mainland/ Coast Region

21 Municipalities

Current ALR 154,069 hectares

Lower Mainland/Coast ALR is 3.3% of the total ALR which is approximately 5.9% of the region

Northern Region

6 Regional Districts
18 Municipalities

Current ALR 2,303,764 hectares

Northern ALR is 49.0% of the total ALR which is approximately 5.0% of the region

Okanagan Region

3 Regional Districts
14 Municipalities

Current ALR 185,065 hectares

Okanagan ALR is 3.9% of the total ALR which is approximately 8.4% of the region

Vancouver Island

6 Regional Districts
16 Municipalities

Current ALR 105,374 hectares

Vancouver Island ALR is 2.2% of the total ALR which is approximately 1.9% of the region

Comprehensive statistical information pertaining to all applications considered is available in a Commission publication titled *"Agricultural Land Reserve Statistics - January 1, 1990"*.

Statement of Revenue

Income received and credited to the consolidated revenue fund of the Province of British Columbia was as follows (Note 2):

	1989/90	1988/89
Sale of Properties	**$18,430.00**	**$ .00**

Statement of Expenditure

Description	1989/90	1988/89
Salaries and Benefits	**$799,211.00**	**$868,811.00**
Fees and Allowances	**120,402.00**	**107,683.00**
Professional Services	**34,192.00**	**18,512.00**
Travel	**25,274.00**	**24,915.00**
Communications	**.00**	**11,548.00**
Office	**12,551.00**	**9,465.00**
Furniture and Equipment	**5,217.00**	**.00**
Materials and Supplies	**9,864.00**	**13,039.00**
Rent	**230,808.00**	**230,302.00**
Computer Equipment	**3710.00**	**371.00**
Other	**23.00**	**7.00**
	$1,241,252.00	**$1,102,653.00**

Approved by the Commission:

Lorne Greenaway, Chair

K.B. Miller, General Manager

1. Soil Conservation Act Deposits

	1989/90	1988/89
Cash on Deposit	**$11,500.00**	**$10,000.00**

In addition to the foregoing cash deposits, the Commission holds letters of credit and other securities totalling $841,050.00 under the Soil Conservation Act guaranteeing restoration of properties in accordance with sound agricultural practices.

2. As of 1 April 1988 all farmlands, except one parcel, administered in co-operation with the Farmland Resources Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food were transferred to the Ministry of Crown Lands. The sale of the one parcel, was completed in fiscal year 1989/90.

Effective administration of the Agricultural Land Commission Act requires a Commission membership comprised of individuals with varying agricultural and administrative backgrounds. The Commissioners are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council upon the recommendation of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries; the Lieutenant- Governor in Council also designates one member as Chair.

Ian Patton Chair (Delta)
President of ID. Paton and Associates Limited; Director of Paton Holsteins Limited; Member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee of the Pacific National Exhibition; Former President of the B.C. Institute of Agrologists

Harold Allison (Princeton)
Rancher; Past President of the B.C. Federation of Agriculture; Active in other Agricultural Organizations

Allan Claridge (Oyama)
Orchardist; Former President of the B.C. Fruit Grower's Association; Former Chairman of the Canadian Horticultural Council

Jim Collins (Fort St. John)
Grain, Forage Seed and Beef farmer; Inter Ag Group Consulting; Executive Director of the B.C. Federation of Agriculture; Farm Credit Corporation Appeal Board Member; Director of B.C. Grain Producers Association

John Malenstyn (Delta)
Dairy and Crops Operation; Director of the Mainland Dairyman's Association; President of the Independent Dairyman's Association

Bob Murdoch (Burnaby)
General Manager of the Agricultural Land Commission (Retired August '89); Former Regional Director for the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing; Former Manager of the University Endowment Land

Support Staff

Robert P. Murdoch, General Manager
Retired – August 1989

Kirk B. Miller, Acting General Manager

Administrative Support Staff

M. Jean Sherwood, Executive Secretary
Alison Blazar/Debby Denis
Patricia Redman
Lucena Varias

Planning, Processing and Technical Branch

Jim P. Plotnikoff, Director

PLANNING BRANCH

Mark Gillis, Planner
Barry E. Smith, Planner

RESEARCH & PROCESSING BRANCH

Shirley Brightman
Raymond Candy
Brenda Felker
Colin Fry
Everett Lew
Barbara Snyder/Gordon Bednard
Brian Underhill

MAPPING BRANCH

Gordon Bednard/Gerry Hallett
Mike Tippet (Aux)

Soils Management Branch

Kirk B. Miller, Director to August 1989
Director – Vacant
Brian McBride, Soils Specialist